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ABSTRACT

This booklet was intended to teach parents about head lice, which are small, wingless, crawling insects that feed on human blood. The booklet briefly discusses: (1) physical characteristics of lice; (2) ways of becoming infested with head lice, such as sharing combs; (3) nits, which are the eggs of lice; (4) the difference between nits and hair debris such as dandruff; (5) the use and dangers of lice-killing insecticide products; (6) additional actions that must be taken, such as washing all bedding and vacuuming rugs, when someone in the family is infested with lice; and (7) the necessity of notifying the child's school and other parents in the neighborhood when parents discover their child is infested with lice. (BC)

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Keep wits not nits

A rational approach to head lice from the National Pediculosis Association.

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The National Pediculosis Association was incorporated in 1983 as the only non-profit health agency established to build awareness about head lice and to standardize head lice control policies nationwide. The NPA seeks to dispel myths about pediculosis while encouraging research and development for safer and more effective management procedures.

Published by the National Pediculosis Association in cooperation with the Massachusetts Medical Society Auxiliary, Waltham, Massachusetts.

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ISBN: 1-880586-00-2

Written and designed by Deborah Z. Altschuler, Linda Menditto, Don Salvucci and Jill Doherty.

Illustrations chosen from the annual National Pediculosis Association's Head Lice Awareness Poster Contest.

First Edition March 1992
Second Edition July 1992

Head lice are more prevalent among American children than all other communicable childhood diseases combined.

This book has been developed as a teaching tool, and its contents reflect the NPA's list of most frequently asked questions. Parents who know how to detect head lice early can help minimize the disruption head lice can bring to families, schools, child care centers, and camps.

For the children

Acknowledgments

This book was printed with the generous support of the Massachusetts Medical Society Auxiliary, and reflects the NPA and MMSA's commitment to cooperative efforts in public health education.

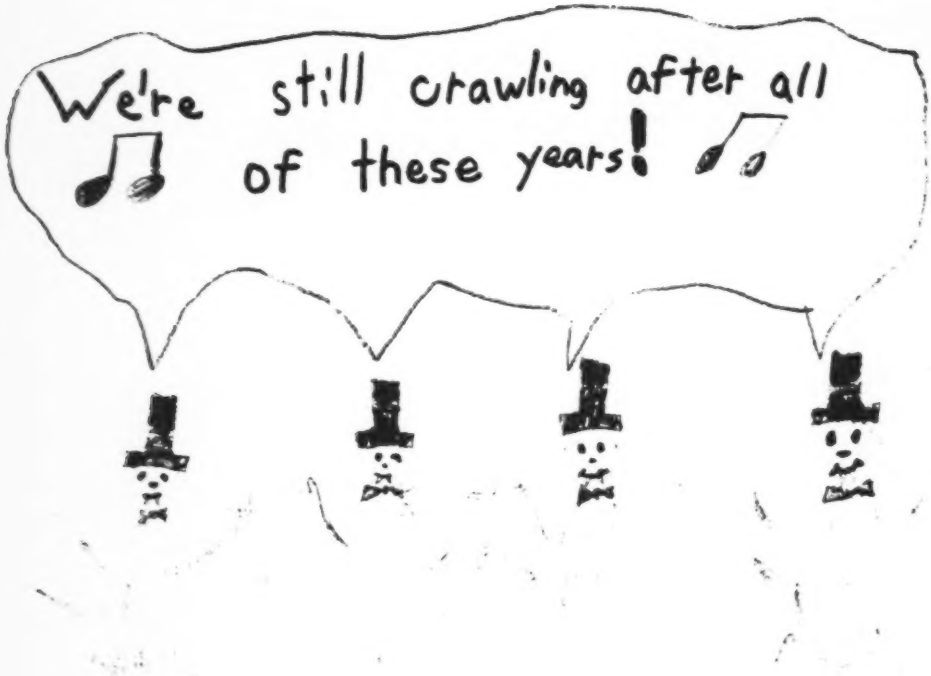
A special note of thanks to the children across the country, who through their illustrations, gave us their impressions of head lice.

LICE ARE SMART

They can ADD eggs to your head.
They can SUBTRACT blood from scalps.
They can MULTIPLY quickly.
They can DIVIDE you from your friends
BE SMARTER THAN THEM

Lisa Realbuto
Grade 4

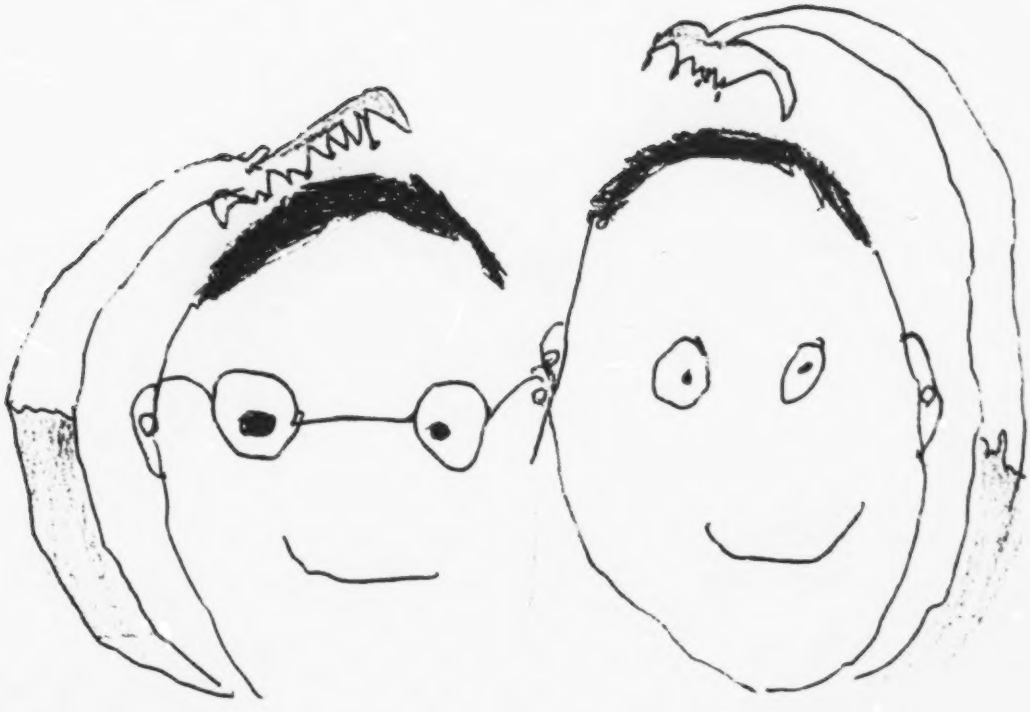
Head lice are small, wingless insects which feed on human blood. They are about the size of sesame seeds and have six legs equipped with claws to grasp the hair.



Michelle Saxton
Grade 6

Lice are crawling insects. They cannot hop, jump, or fly. Pets do not get head lice.

Be a friend Don T Share
C OMBs



Randy Pino
Grade 2

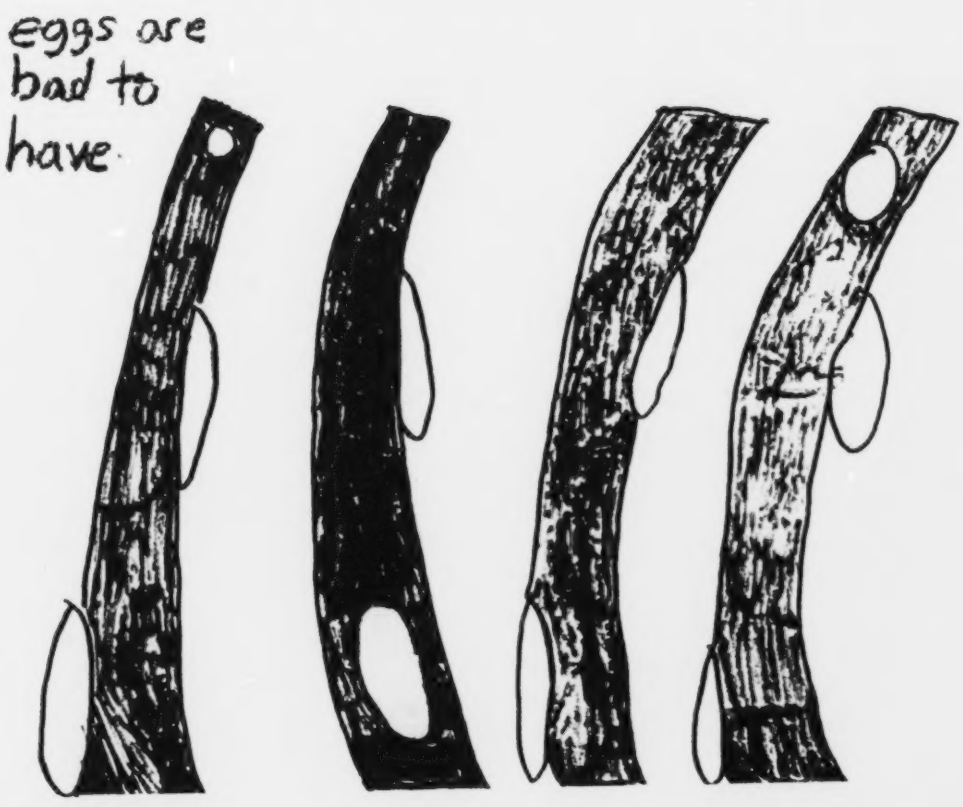
People get head lice...by direct contact with someone who has them or by sharing hats, brushes, combs, or headrests.

Travis Hart
Kindergarten

Head lice may often cause itching, a reminder to look for crawling lice or their nits (lice eggs). Lice move quickly, so it is not uncommon to see only nits. Head lice and their nits can also be found in eyebrows and eyelashes.

Mick Cowden
Kindergarten

Nits are small, oval-shaped eggs that are "glued" at an angle to the side of the hair shaft. They can be seen anywhere on the hair, especially behind the ears and at the back of the neck.



Kyli Santacroce
Grade 3

Nits should not be confused with hair debris such as DEC plugs and hair casts. DEC plugs are bright white, irregularly-shaped clumps of fat cells stuck to the hair shaft. Hair casts are thin, elongated, cylinder-shaped segments of dandruff which encircle the hair shaft and are easily dislodged. Head lice treatment is not appropriate for hair debris.

Head Lice

It's everybody's problem

Kerry St. Pierre
Grade 5

If you discover that someone in your family is indeed infested with head lice, everyone in the household should be checked. *Only* those who are infested should be treated, but they should be treated at the same time, so they won't reinfest each other. Various lice-killing products* are available at your pharmacy. None is intended for routine or preventive use.

*The NPA discourages the use of lindane products, such as Kwell.

Be Concerned

Ask about Lice

Corey Cornett
Grade 3

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All lice-killing products are pesticides, and must be used with caution. Consult your pharmacist or physician before applying or using pesticides when the person involved is pregnant, nursing, has lice or nits in the eyebrows or eyelashes, has other health problems, has allergies, or is using medication.

Joshua Reed
Kindergarten

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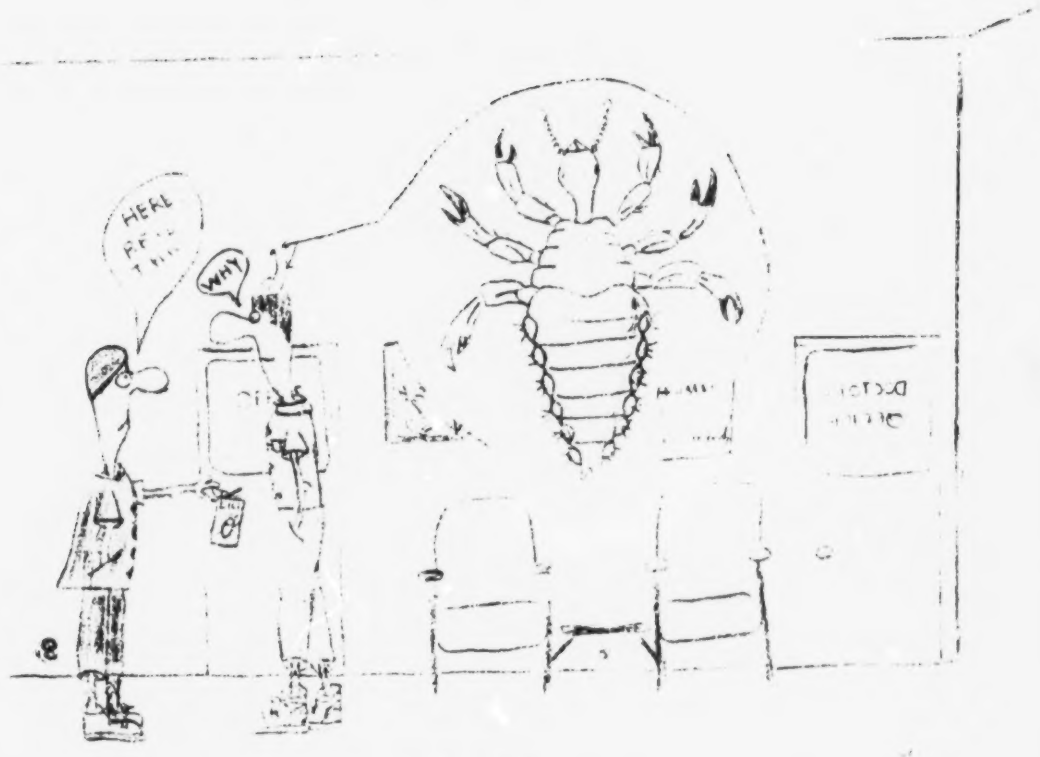
Head lice pesticides can be absorbed into the body. Avoid applying them when there are open wounds on the scalp of the person to be treated or on the hands of the person who will apply the product. Avoid using pesticides on a baby.



Brian Goolsby
Grade 6

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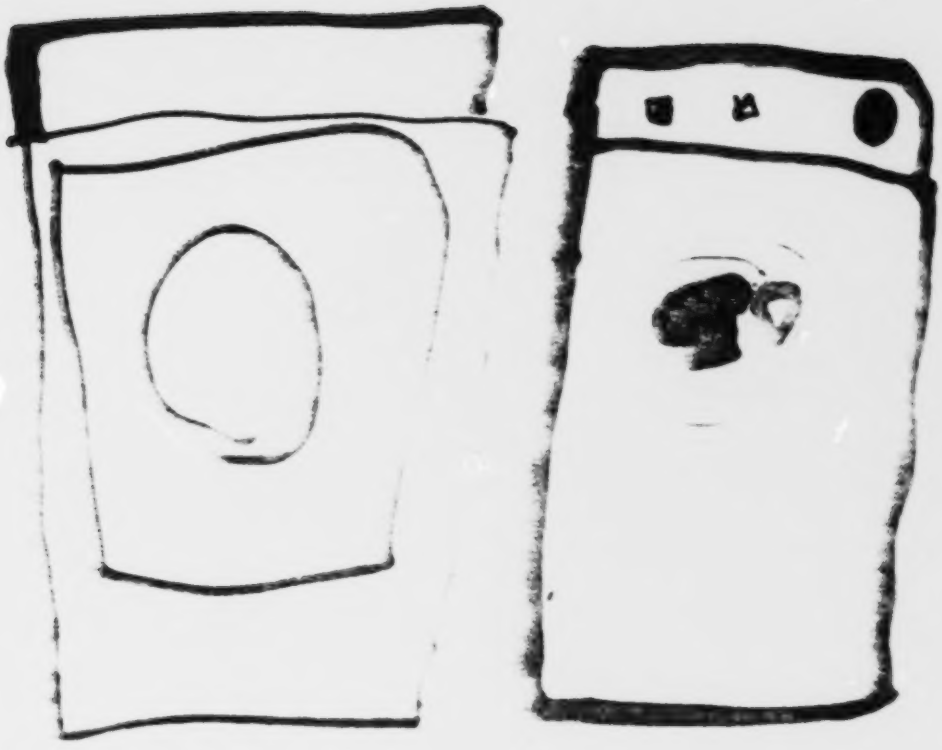
Read the package directions carefully. Use the product over the sink (not in the tub or shower). This will minimize pesticide absorption and exposure to the whole body. Be sure to keep the eyes covered.

Cythinia Cruz
Grade 6

Remove *all* nits. No lice pesticide kills nits 100%, and nits that are left on the hair can cause diagnostic confusion. Thorough nit removal will reduce or eliminate the need for additional treatments. You can remove them with a nit removal comb, baby safety scissors, or your fingernails.



Erin Mary Croke
Grade 1

Wash bedding and recently worn clothing in hot water, and dry in a hot dryer. Clean your combs and brushes, then soak them in hot water (not boiling) for 10 minutes.

Steven Anthony
Grade 4

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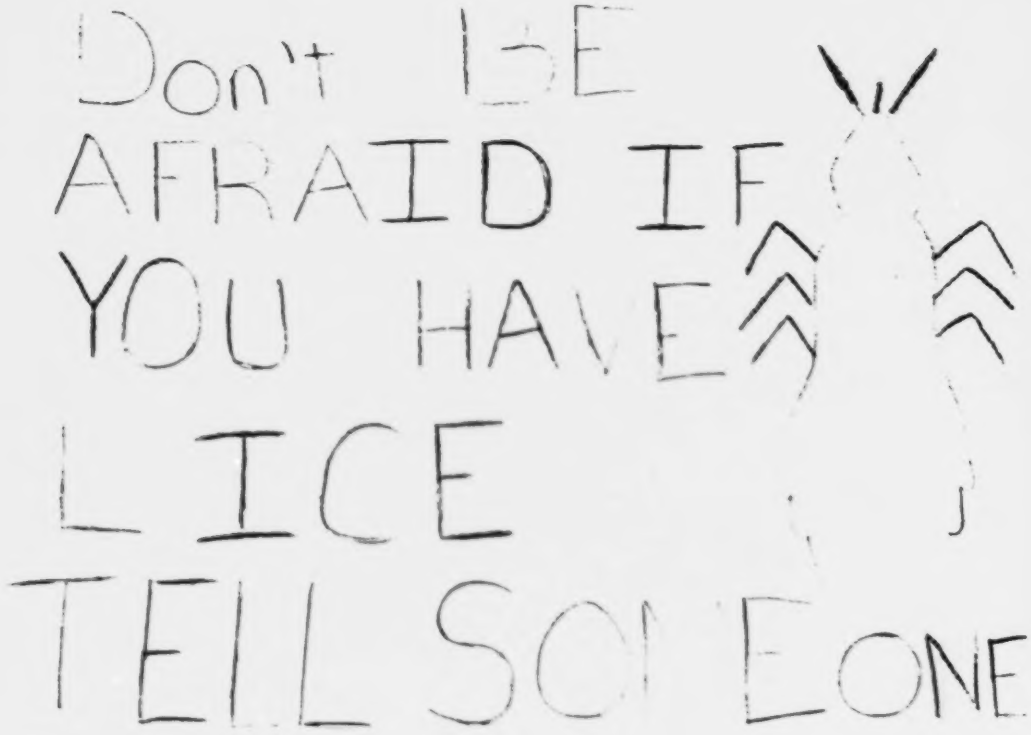
Do not use lice sprays. Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or fallen hairs with attached nits from furniture, mattresses, rugs, stuffed animals, toys and car seats.



Larry McCoy
Grade 6

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Notify your child's school,
camp, or child care provider.
Notify neighborhood parents.

Jessica Jolly
Grade 3

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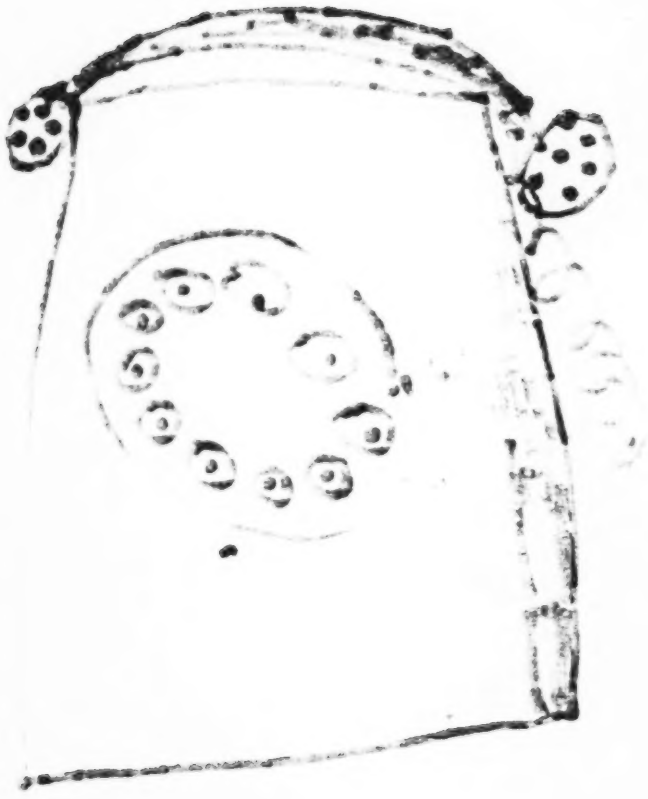
Check your children for head lice on a regular basis — at least once a week. This is the best way to protect your family and your community.



Erin Marie Sullivan
Grade 1

This book is one of the many head lice prevention resources from the NPA's *Not just another lousy catalog.* Also featured in the catalog is the NPA's new video on head lice prevention, detection, and treatment.

To order additional copies of this book, or to receive a catalog, call 1-800-446-4NPA.

"*Keep Your Wits, Not Your Nits* has what you need to know about head lice."

Jeff M. Jellin, Pharm. D.
Editor, Pharmacist's Letter

"An authoritative, easy-to-read guide for parents and early childhood professionals."

Jill Strauss
Associate Editor
Scholastic Pre-K Today Magazine

"At last, a parent-friendly approach to a common health problem."

Robert Truding, M.D., Ph.D.
The Children's Hospital of Alabama

NPA

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